

E 187

.97

.P5 P4

1935

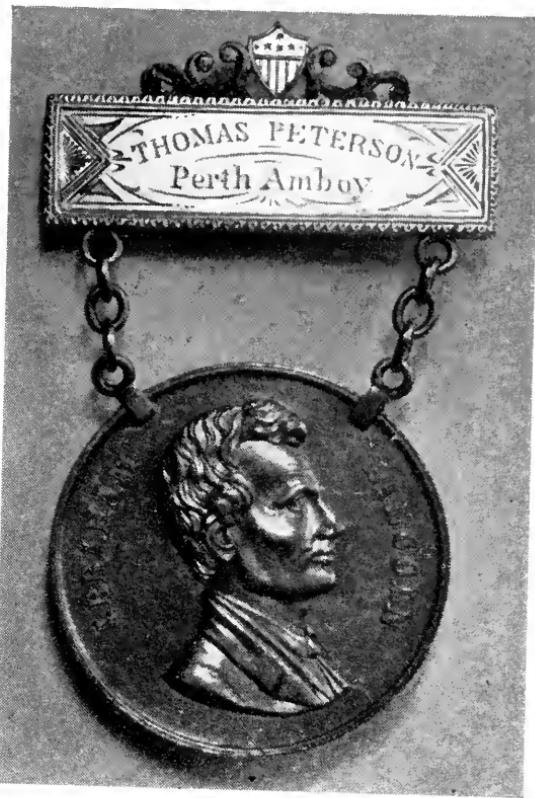
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00003256947

The
Presentation Of A Medal
To
Thomas Peterson - Mundy

HISTORY AND PROCEEDINGS
ATTENDING THE PRESENTATION OF A MEDAL TO
THOMAS PETERSON - MUNDY



HISTORY AND PROCEEDINGS
ATTENDING THE PRESENTATION OF A MEDAL TO
THOMAS PETERSON - MUNDY



Decoration Day, May 30th, 1884.
IN THE CITY OF PERTH AMBOY, N. J.

In commemoration of his having been the First Colored Citizen in the
United States to cast a vote under the Fifteenth Amendment

WITH ADDRESSES BY
HON. WILLIAM PATERSON
AND OTHERS

PERTH AMBOY, N. J.
THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY DEMOCRAT PRINT

1884

REPRINTED 1935, H. E. PICKERSGILL, PERTH AMBOY, N. J.

$\sqrt{121}$
 $\sqrt{144}$
 $\sqrt{169}$
 $\sqrt{196}$

$$\begin{array}{r} \sqrt{121} \\ 11 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} \sqrt{144} \\ 12 \end{array}$$

15

THE reason for printing this pamphlet will be found on the concluding page, but some preface explanatory of the proceedings should accompany the publication. Such proceedings are designed to commemorate an event that, from its nature, could be only single and singular, the exercise of the right of suffrage by the first voter in the United States under the Fifteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution. This account is compiled mainly from a letter which appeared in the Newark *Evening News* on the day succeeding the presentation, wherein the circumstances are narrated, concisely and correctly.

The proclamation from the State Department of the United States, declaring the adoption of that Amendment was issued on the 30th of March, 1870, and appeared in the newspapers on the morning of the next day. A special election for the ratification or rejection of a city charter, revised and entire, had been appointed to be held in Perth Amboy on the 31st of March, and at that election, and within but a short time after the proclamation was received, Thomas Peterson, better known as Tom Mundy, was the first of his race who exercised the right of suffrage so recently conferred. No other election was held on that day either in New Jersey or any other State. The fact of the vote thus cast, with the name and biography of the voter, was announced at the time, and noticed generally by the press of the country. Nothing on the part of anyone in dispute of this claimant was known in Perth Amboy until in April last, a paragraph appeared in a newspaper at Princeton, asserting that the distinction belonged to a colored suffragist in that academic borough. To that time Peterson had rested securely on his laurels and had no reason to suppose that his title in that respect could be slurred or impeached. Investigation proved, however, that the Princeton claimant could show a right accruing only from the 13th of April, 1870, and so it was plain, could take nothing by his motion. The foundation of this claim will appear from the address and letter printed herein. In order to determine the priority of claim by Peterson, a committee of citizens,

selected by him, took charge of the matter, and at his request, initiated and devised such measures as they might deem effectual and appropriate to establish the right beyond dispute. The result was that a fund sufficient to procure a gold medal commemorating the event, was procured without difficulty. As the person who was the first to advise Peterson to exercise the right, and the officer who received the vote on the 31st of March, 1870, were still living, and the record remained among the municipal archives, the fact that such vote was cast on that day could be substantiated beyond the possibility of a doubt, leaving the chance of any having been prior thereto, of the most homopathic and infinitesimal small kind. These two, Mr. J. L. Kearny and Partick Convery, both of whom had been in the city government at different times and holding various offices, the latter having also represented the Assembly District in the Legislature, with William Paterson, ex-Mayor, and now a Judge of the Court of Errors and Appeals, and John Fothergill, an Alderman of the city, Democrats, with J. L. Boggs, who had been collector of the port for two terms, U. B. Watson, an ex-Mayor and President of the Bank, and I. T. Golding, who had filled various city positions, Republicans, formed the committee or council of action chosen by Peterson. This committee, having prepared a suitable medal composed of a gold bar from which is pendant a large medallion, and having made the necessary arrangements, selected Decoration Day as the most appropriate for the purpose of presentation, and appointing one of their number to deliver an address, gave notice that such commemorative proceedings would take place in the Council Chamber of the City Hall.

Thomas Peterson is a colored man who was born in Metuchen in the year 1824, where his father, of the same name, was in the service of the Mundy family. Hence comes the appellation by which he is known most commonly. In 1828, his parents removed to Perth Amboy, where his father died. His mother is still living at an advanced age, having been born at the close of the last century. He married a girl who had served an apprenticeship under the gradual emancipation laws, by which slavery

was abolished in New Jersey, with Andrew Bell, then continuing to live in the family of which one of the committee selected by him for this occasion, was the head. He is a man well known in the city and the eastern part of the county, and has been universally respected. By trade he may be said to be a man of all work, yet inferior in none, and has been, is still, and no doubt will remain quite an institution until called to go where Uncle Ned and all the good darkies go. He is intelligent, as may be judged from the fact that the same year in which his race was enfranchised, he was chosen, with no opposition, as one of a number to revise the Charter for the adoption of which he cast his first vote, has been sent several times as a delegate to conventions of his party, and has been summoned to serve as a juror in the County Courts. He was appointed Superintendent of the Public School building then just finished, to take charge and care thereof by a unanimous vote, when the appointing power was entirely of a different political sentiment. No one possesses public confidence to a greater extent. On the obverse side of the medallion is the Profile of Mr. Lincoln and on the reverse these letters:

PRESENTED BY CITIZENS OF
PERTH AMBOY, N. J.
To
THOMAS PETERSON,
THE FIRST COLORED VOTER IN
THE UNITED STATES UNDER
THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT,
AT AN ELECTION HELD IN
THAT CITY, MARCH 31ST, 1870

At the appointed time, James M. Chapman, a former Mayor, was called to preside at the request of the Committee, and after some short but very appropriate remarks connected with the occasion, the Rev. Dr. Stevenson, of the Presbyterian Church, made a brief and suitable prayer. The chairman then introduced William Paterson, who had been selected by the Committee for the purpose and who spoke as follows:

Mr. Chairman and Fellow Citizens:

Having been selected to prepare some remarks setting forth the nature of the occasion, and the reasons which have called for this ceremonial, I am fearful that any who may entertain great expectations from the performance of this part of the programme, will find those expectations vain. Perhaps also, their patience may be exhausted by the lines being lengthened and drawn out beyond what would seem requisite. But they must remember that the occasion is unique, and can excuse many errors. Standing here by the side of this municipal magisterial woolssack, I am reminded of the story recorded of a young scapegrace who, hearing some wise ones speculating on the causes that produce the odd sentiment coming over persons frequently that the situation in which they find themselves at a given moment is not now, but merely the repetition of a former one, non-plussed the moralists by saying to them it was just so with him, he never lighted a cheroot but what he felt he had been in the same situation ever so many times before. That is my case now. A college professor, it is stated, is making the subject an interesting study.

There are events which can happen but once, whether in a year or cycles of years, in an age or countless ages, in short, in as many untold rolling centuries, as geological scientists assure the unlearned *oi polloi*, have passed away since the glacial boulders lost their momentum, and sloughed off at the highland range by the base of which a part of the proprietary immigrants who debarked on these shores from the Caledonia, settled down and named their location in memory of the land they left behind. That style of nomenclature was retained until aesthetic railway magnets exchanged the original compound word, which had merit and meaning for another without either quality, but of more euphonious and artistic sound, and so in this 19th century, there is no longer a railroad station at Scotch Plains, but trains are whistled down at Fanwood. The chain of hills rising above the level location selected by those pioneer settlers, who, it may be said also, seem to have had level heads, is part of the long

Allegheny reach, beginning near the Gulf of Mexico, stretches through the Shenandoah Valley and the Blue Ridge, brings up in a wide gap at the Catskills, thence jumps over the Hudson to Vermont and New Hampshire, culminating in Mount Washington.

But it may be asked, in what manner is this chain of remark linked in or connected with the event that brings this audience here today? I am certain, however, it will not be regarded as far-fetched or inappropriate, when it is considered that what I have said has a relation, close and direct, to the municipal history of Perth Amboy. Anything touching that, even incidentally, I take it will not be out of place or uninteresting. Reflect that it is just two hundred and one years ago, on this 30th of May, since the agents of the Proprietors reported to their home lords the choice of a location seeming to combine every advantage for the foundation of a future colonial metropolis. Within a short time the surveyors had carried their lines by notch and blaze through the primeval forest, and planted their stakes at the corners of Water street and High street, and Back street, and Gully street, and Market street, and Smith street, and South Dock street, and North Dock street, and North Back street, forming, as they intended, the North Ward of Perth Amboy, to be separated from the South Ward, since South Amboy, by the Raritan, then a narrow ferry comparatively to what it has become by the encroachments of the tides. Two centuries ago the foundations of this city were laid, and within the original limits, a person may look in vain for a memorial of any object that met the eye of the emigrant as his foot touched the heather of his future home. Over every land mark time has ruthlessly driven his triumphal chariot. I offer no excuse for detaining your attention a moment by this passing allusion to those times in our early history ere yet the axe of the woodman had leveled the forest and let in the sun, before a sail had whitened the fair bosom of our opening bay, and when the rushes that lined the river banks, bent only beneath the light paddle of the Indian bark. I do not propose to dwell at any length just here, for time will not permit. It

occurred to me, however, that sufficient might be spared to say what I have said in reference to those infant days when Perth Amboy was wrapped in swathing bands, and at the same time contribute to the interest of this ceremony. I am glad to find, from the marks of approbation manifested on your part, that I was not mistaken, and will close this historical allusion to our common mother, now begining three centuries of municipal life, old as age is counted in this western world, though only a flea-bit in the chronology of time, with an extract from lines not unfamiliar, perhaps, to some present and needing no quotation marks

Old city of a loyal line,
And royal ancestry,
Where rising suns come up and shine,
From out the Atlantic sea,
Fair is the sight that meets the eye,
As there the waters lay,
Blue mirrored from a cloudless sky
Upon thy opening bay.

God bless King Charles the Second, and,
God bless the Duke of York
Whose grantees on this point of land
Began a goodly work;
Their lineal successors yet,
Hold royal councils here,
The Lords Proprietors who set
In conclave twice a year.

They had great expectations when
They laid their colony,
But as you know, the hopes of men,
Oft go by contrary;
And so instead of rising fame,
Wealth, honor, and renown,
For near two hundred years in name,
It was a one-horse town.

But now the locomotive flies
Upon the iron track,
And cars go rushing on the ties,
And vessels sail and tack,
And manufactories rise thick--
The waves of commerce roll,
And export salamander brick,
With oysters, ore and coal.

Press onward in your rising course,
Push forward on the track;
The headlights of the iron horse,
Cast no reflections back;
On in the struggle and the strife,
On at a panting pace,
A boy can only win in life
By leading in the race.

The original emigrants who came across the sea to build a home upon this ocean shore, may have been prosaic in nature, and their settlement, until within a few years, must be said to have partaken of that characteristic. Eventually, however, there was a poetic eye as well as one of a practical nature among them and we can hope, from what is going on today, that the close of two succeeding centuries will realize to a fuller extent the enthusiastic anticipations of those who long have slept just where the turf slopes down to meet the changing tide.

Here, then, is an event *sui generis*, one of its own kind, peculiarly peculiar, so to speak, never to occur again in the history of this city, this county, this State, or of the United States. This particular occasion is to commemorate that event, to establish the fact, that the right of suffrage conferred by the negative language of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution, was exercised first within the limits of this municipality, which, as Horace sang of his patron Marcellus, can claim a royal ancestry, and of which its Chief Magistrate can

say in the language of one of the lines, *o et presidium et dulce decus meum*, rendered freely thus, "of which fair home I am presiding genius, Chief of Police, and Head Centre." It was exercised almost immediately after the adoption of that Amendment had been proclaimed, it might be said, almost before the ink had dried on the paper whereon it was written. That became operative on the 30th of March, 1870, and on the morning of the next day, when it was printed and published as a settled matter and a vested right, the first ballot by virtue thereof, was cast within the walls of this building, then in the primitive antique condition in which royal governors had addressed loyal legislators, and where in later years State Governors, and State Legislators, and a State Judiciary, had convened to mould and establish the foundations of a new State and a free people, free in the exercise of a great prerogation, that of self-government. No time was lost between the authority to act and the act. Such first ballot was cast by one who is about to receive a testimonial to the fact. The individual who suggested the exercise of the right and through whom the presentation will be made, and the officer who received the vote, stands with him here today. It was a meet coincidence that the adopted citizen should welcome the pioneer of an enfranchised race to the highest privilege of freemen. Others who act in this free man's council have been selected by the one central figure of the group, possibly because all have been local magistrates, Mayors, and Recorders, and Aldermen, and Councilmen, and Clerks, and Collectors, and Constables, and Treasurers, School Superintendents, and Trustees, and Assessors, and Street Commissioners, and Chiefs of Police, and Federal Collectors and Deputies, and State Assemblymen and State Judges. There is not a virginal high private in the company, and, as is well known, the donee of this testimonial left the ranks soon after joining the electoral army and became a colleague of the speaker in revising the charter for the adoption of which he led the franchise way of all his host. It was an augury of good omen, that there was no political signification in that first vote so cast, and it is evident there can be more in this movement. All the promoters act in this matter because the

first exercise of that right should have proper credit and be attested beyond any and every doubt. The fact has been disputed and the man whose prior right had been questioned sought advice and counsel to assist him in reading his title clear to voting at the polls. That was agreed to cheerfully, and cordially, with the result about to be witnessed. A medal, with an appropriate inscription in raised letters, bearing the profile of the Federal Executive under whom the day of jubilee had begun to dawn upon the race, was devised. Nor should that be wrought from inferior material. Gold, well refined, and that alone, could be a true emblem of the right of suffrage. Required funds for the purpose were raised without difficulty, by "prescription," as one of his race put it. Well, as you see, the "prescription" was successful, the Head Centre of this Council of Seven will administer the dose with much pleasure, and the patient will take it down with equal satisfaction.

A few words are necessary in explanation of the length of time—fourteen years—which has intervened since the event about to be commemorated now occurred.

There is a common saying familiar to all that a darkey is under the woodpile. That is just now the case; in fact two of them, one over and one under. More than one original Jacobs is sure to turn up. That is patent in the scientific world. Rival claimants always dispute the priority of inventions or discoveries of magnitude or interest. Plenty of examples illustrate this. It is easy to find an instance here to show that genius has been robbed of the honor due to brain power, and that credit belonging to the thought, the ingenuity, the skill, the labor, of one, is appropriated by others. Those are living today who have witnessed with me the germ of the principle which causes night to glisten with sunbeam brilliancy applied in Perth Amboy new more than half a century ago. Then the safest lock in common use could be opened by a single strand of wire, and ten years later on, after a single lesson, I could spring the catch that closed every mail bag in the United States by a blow that would not stun a cat or

cur, for like the small end of an egg, that the feat was easy when once learned. Who turns today to yonder grounds where living comrades lay forget-me-nots upon dead comrades' graves to seek the spot where sleeps the dust of one who first worked out the scheme, and developed the practicability of utilizing those principles, which in this generation, are not matter of wonder, because like the sunlight, so common. It is not the ordinary operations on nature that attract attention or can cause surprise. Who gives credit to Solomon Andrews for what is due to him in this respect? Something akin thus occurred in this matter. Another claimant has turned up, unknown, until within these latter days. This one has been reposing on his laurels many years. No dream of rivalship and disturbed the sereness of his slumbers, for did not his ballot follow the act of enfranchisement almost as thunder roar succeeds the lightening flash? So it came out not long ago that

Another of the colored clan
To make a rhyme, say black and tan,

living in a University town of high repute where the same dark hue was interwoven in the academic flag, was carrying a certificate that the honor of having cast the first of those little pellets which some one sings as executing a freeman's will as lightening that of God, belonged to him. A courteous answer returned by the editor of the paper in which the claim was set up, to a letter of inquiry, revealed the history of that claim and upon what it rested. I will read the answer in connection with the paragraph which first attracted attention. The statement is made fairly, but it is clear from the facts of his case, that while "Mose" insists that his "huckleberry pie is above Tom's persimmon," the letter is entitled to "take the black cake." While he is mistaken in the idea that the election here was for a charter amendment about roads, it could have made no difference if it had been so long as authorized by law. A vote, whether for person or for measures, is a vote where all is legal. That election was to adopt or reject an entire new charter, and the fountain is above the stream. Had there been no charter in Princeton how could

Mr. Mose have voted? He voted for officers under a charter, and this one for a charter over officers. Any one can see that originality depends upon priority of date, and that is undisputed. I own to an exalted regard for Princeton in more respects than one. Many associations are connected with its academic and municipal history. In fact it is quite a weak spot about which I babble forth occasionally in rills of rhyme and other streams. When but a hamlet amid the primeval forest, with the Indian pathway still a high road from river to river, the middle class Orangeman, who with many of his clan, was driven from the Ulster Pale, along the Foyle, in County Donegal, by the harsh legislation still characterizing the course of Great Britain toward the Green Isle, planted the ancestral stalk right there in that retired locality, afterward to become famous in academical renown and revolutionary history. Some things among his relics show that Presbyterian Popes then lent the approval of theological sanction to raise funds for building meeting houses by means considered at this time as consistent with the morality or the minorologies of the shorter catechism. Three generations of his descendants, distinguished or otherwise, are among the children of a Dane who is called the mother of statesmen, and a fourth is wanting only because of the wrong kind. But when Mr. Moses Schenck, born it would seem during my collegiate course, proposes to be acknowledged as the "artertype" who led the colored host to enfranchised citizenship and keeping down democratic majorities, Princeton or no Princeton, college or no college, no matter what I may have said or sung of memories and associations that can go out only with the vital spark, I shall be, most decidedly, a doubting Thomas. You will see then just why this ceremony and presentation have been advised and carried out. As long as no adverse claim was known to be set up, there was a tacit acknowledgment of right. "Mose" takes a step beyond what his medal was designed to and did certify, and the objective point, the true inwardness of this demonstration, is to expose the fallacy of that claim as publicly as it has been made.

Another word to what is longer in remark than should have been. My particular part in this ceremonial matter is more ornamental than useful. The only merit I can claim is the suggestion, that this day, particularly and properly, was the one to complete the work of presentation. What time could be selected as more appropriate than that in which the surviving comrades of those who sleep where all of them one day must sleep, gather throughout the land to lay flowers of affection on the graves of their companions, and drop a silent tear to their memory. The right conferred, of which this medal is emblematic was an incident of the sacrifices made to secure the perpetuity of this Union of States and people. They who fell before the serried foe testified their devotion in death, and they who survive, swelling, man by man and year by year, the numbers of the great majority, can continue no custom more beautiful in simplicity than the one of paying these floral tributes, when nature is clothed anew in the verdure of spring life, and dressed in fair robes of festal green. While we are here to commemorate one, and by no means a secondary consequence, of a strife now terminated, let us trust, forever, Comrades and friends have gathered upon this anniversary around the soldiers' graves and standing there,

Upon the spring-clad turf they strew
The offerings of love,
And as beneath the morning dew
The grass grows green above,
Will keep those memories green 'till they
No more life's pathway shall tread,
And others chant the funeral lay,
And requiem of the dead.

Thus shall the pine keep green their fame
Who for the Union died,
The palm beneath their names who fell
Upon the losing side;
Comrades and friends for years shall come,
And in their memory lay

These votive offerings of love
Each Decoration Day.

Their work is done, and the brave that sleep, sleep well in their dark, lowly homes. The living, once enemies of war, are one now in peace. You will join with me in the sentiment thus expressed by one who shared the danger and the glory alike waiting on the battle field.

No more on life's parade shall meet
The brave who dared to do,
No more the muffled drum roar beat
The soldier's last tattoo,
On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.

The sunshine of their native sky
Smiles sadly on them here,
And kindred hearts and eyes watch by
The turf to memory dear;
Nor shall their glory be forgot
While fame her record keeps,
If honor points the hallowed spot
Where valor proudly sleeps.

To the partakers of the privilege now commemorated in the person of the one whose fortune it was to exercise the right for the first time, I would commend the recollection of the sacrifices and services by which the boon was conferred upon them. As Minerva sprang full-armed from the brain of Jove so they have passed to the full stature of American citizens without the preparatory training of indentures or apprenticeship. I stop here to urge upon their attention the single consideration that a higher principle is involved in this gift than the mere manual capacity of depositing a folded slip of paper, containing a few

printed or written names in a rectangular box. New privileges impose new responsibilities. No class or clan has interfered with the free and full exercise of the right thus newly acquired, and this action today is but an indication of the general spirit in which the posterity of the tribes who dwelt "where America's sunny fountains roll down the golden sand," have been welcomed to the full brother-hood of man. That is the philanthropic phraseology, I believe, used by enthusiasts, and whatever it may mean exactly, seems to cover the ground. For new duties, new qualifications are necessary, and these must follow observation and experience and practice. New scholars must begin to learn, and all commence with A B C. The facilities for education are more and better now, and of a higher standard, than when the right of suffrage was extended among the Caucasian race. There is no reason why these facilities should not be improved and a corresponding elevation in good attributes must ensue and a higher tone in every respect be given. None would seek to withhold these advantages for any reason now, and especially should they who have been made partakers of a new covenant and new blessings, become fitted for the performance of new trusts, and so be enabled, in the coming of time, to rise eventually to those grades of excellence and plans of merit that can be attained only by a living faith and good works. A right of this high character may be abused, and that will be the danger in this case against which to guard, until time shall have conquered the force of prejudice and passion.

Do any ask, what of the man? Well, he is no myth, and is known as widely as any other, from Sandy Point to Crane Creek, and from the Long Ferry to Spa Brook. It may be said with entire correctness, that more people have lived with him, or been in his employment, at various times and in different pursuits, than with any other single person in the city. A stranger would be referred to him as a celebrity and an institution of Perth Amboy, an artistic artisan, not in one but in many departments, more fully expressed in a common phrase disguised in as classical Latin as designates legal or medical terms, a Johannes

Omnium Artium. Thomas Peterson may be an unknown quantity comparatively, but I should smile at the ignorance of such in this community as would venture to say, they had never heard of Tom Mundy. An American, with as much propriety, might profess ignorance of the existence of the hero of the hatchet story, or an alumnus of Princeton College of Johnny, or one of his own race that the soul of John Brown was moving on still. His name alone is his passport here in life, and crowned with electoral laurel, will be his eulogy in death.

And so we meet to decorate,
By token on the Freedman's coat,
The man who was in any State,
The first to cast a Freedman's vote.

As I do not propose to encroach on the prerogative of the chairman of the committee, I give way now so that he may proceed to present the testimonial to the donee with the accompaniment of other and fuller remarks, explanatory of historical and personal matters connected with the occasion. I must not interfere, by too protracted a line of remarks, with the peculiar privilege belonging to him in this respect, and conclude with regretting that your patience has been subjected to a longer test than designated originally.

* * * *

The following is a copy of the paragraph in the Princeton *Press* of April last by which attention was first directed to the fact of another claimant to contest the prior right in question:—"Mose is known far and wide as a professor of music. He goes as far as Atlantic City this season, and has officiated at 125 sociables. By the way, he wears a medal conferred upon him by the people of New Jersey, in honor of being the first colored citizen to vote under the Fifteenth Amendment in this State."

This paper was brought to the notice of one of this committee,

who wrote to the editor in regard to the article. Under date of April 21st, a reply was returned in these words:—

"Yours of 19th inst. received. Moses Schenck is the colored man referred to as 'Mose.' He was born in Princeton, and quite an intelligent man. On the 4th of April, 1870, Monday, at the annual election for borough officers, after the Democratic Judges of Election had telegraphed the Attorney General of the State, Moses Schenck, was the first of about 100 colored voters to cast a ballot. The medal referred to reads: 'Moses Schenck, First Voter under the Fifteenth Amendment, Princeton, N. J., April 4, 1870.' I gave Mose the medal, and by it did not mean to claim for him more than that he was the FIRST VOTER IN PRINCETON under the Fifteenth Amendment. The story of his actually being the first voter under the Amendment, has come up under a misapprehension. I have just spoken to Mose about it, and he says he did not set a very high value on Peterson's claim, for he only voted on a question of a charter amendment, while here, it was the regular election for Mayor, Council, etc. Mose is very proud of his medal, and, undoubtedly, shows it very freely to strangers, and probably claims more than he has a right to."

Mr. J. L. Kearny, the chairman of the committee, through whose original suggestion the right of suffrage under the Amendment to the Federal Constitution, the adoption of which by proclamation appeared on the morning of March 31st, 1870, was exercised first by the person about to receive a certificate of the fact, then came forward, and in remarks of some length, suitable and well chosen, presented the testimonial. He expressed the gratification it afforded him to attest the priority of the claim which these proceedings were intended to confirm and establish, the events which led up to the donee appearing at the polls, his history, his character and standing in the community, the esteem in which he was regarded outside of his own race, the demand for his services, the versatility of his powers, being an expert in the various and varied industrial pursuits

which he undertook and paying a tribute to his attributes and local worth that commanded the assent of all present. Mr. Kearny, in this, was qualified, in a peculiar manner, to testify, as the one who thus received at his hands the emblem of suffrage citizenship, had remained in his service for ten consecutive years, which he claimed, entitled him to speak by experience and knowledge. When he closed, the donee returned thanks briefly for this mark of kindness, he would not soon forget.

Mr. Patrick Convery, as the officer who had received the ballot at the polls was then called upon to state his recollections of the circumstances attending the event. This he did in a narrative form and in a manner felicitous and interesting. He said there was no question raised as to the right and it was satisfactory, especially that as an adopted citizen, it had been his privilege to receive the first vote of a class enfranchised on that very day. He was glad, also, to be in a position where his evidence could sustain the priority of right now designed to be established. The remarks of Mr. Convery were timely and appropriate, and lent additional interest to the occasion.

When he concluded, the chairman suggested that while the particular ceremony was finished, he trusted those present would not separate without taking steps to preserve the proceedings in a permanent form. His own idea was that the committee should be continued and be requested to collect and publish, in a suitable manner, the addresses and remarks to which the audience evidently had listened with pleasure and satisfaction. For himself, he would prefer that the history of an event peculiar in itself and which could not occur again, should have some evidence of record, and he was willing to contribute his share to that purpose. He was glad, especially that "Tom Mundy" was the hero of the Freedmen, an institution known well and favorably to all classes, and we should take advantage of the good fortune that enables us to speak well of him in life, and to remember him in death.

This suggestion met the approbation and favor of the audience, and after considering and adopting various propositions, among which was a liberal and kindly offer on the part of a photographic artist to furnish a design from which copies might be taken for illustration, it was decided that the proceedings be published by the committee and a copy be sent to Trenton and Washington for preservation among the records.

This presentation was not political in any sense, for the committee consisted of prominent men of each party. Thomas Mundy, or Peterson, is a Republican, while the chairman of the meeting and speakers are Democrats.



JAN 13 1987

